



HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL XXXX WING
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
PO BOX 339
SPARKS NV 89432-0339

13 February 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL NVWG SQUADRON COMMANDER

FROM: NV/CC

SUBJECT: Flight Release Officers

1. Historically, it has been the practice for squadron commanders to send nominees for Flight Release Officers (FROs) to Wing, and for Wing to publish an FRO list ("orders").
2. The historical process is not consistent with 60-1, which makes the appointment of FROs a responsibility of the Unit Commander – not the Wing.
3. From now on, Unit Commanders will appoint FROs and maintain a current FRO listing in the WMU (or MIMS after the Wing switches to the new system).
 - a. In the WMU, go to Unit Organization and look in the Operations Section. This is where FROs can be added or deleted.
 - b. The Unit Commander will be responsible to assure that phone numbers and email addresses for all FROs are kept current in the computer system. Our analysis of the past FRO list shows that many of the listed personnel are no longer CAP members, that the phone numbers have been disconnected, and that email addresses do not work. One of the main reasons for making this a Unit responsibility is to assure that any changes are reported in the system.
 - c. Members from other units may need to use your FROs, so it is important to assure that the listing is current.
 - d. While updating your FROs, it would be a good time to review the rest of your unit organization and bring it up to date in the WMU. Also, be sure to notice that you can generate and print official PA's directly from this screen. This is the preferred method of unit personnel administration.

4. Any member can access the complete Wing FRO listing by going to the Operations Staff section. There is a link there to view FRO list.
5. Wing has updated the WMU to include approved FROs as of this date.
 - a. You may notice that several of your previous FROs have been deleted from the current list. This is because they did not respond to the recent supplementary instructions for FROs (Attachment 1). You must obtain their acknowledgement of these supplementary instructions before they can continue as FROs.
 - b. Unit Commanders must either requalify those deleted from their lists, or promptly notify them that they have been removed so that they do not give any more flight releases.
 - c. You may add FROs at your own discretion, however any adds to the list as it exists today must be treated as new FROs per para 6 below. This includes former FROs who were deleted for non-response.
6. Before appointing an FRO, the Unit Commander will assure that the candidate:
 - a. Is either an experienced CAP pilot, a qualified incident commander or a Unit Commander of a unit with a flight activity (exceptions to this requirement require the approval of the Region Commander).
 - b. Has completed the National FRO course (available on-line) and received a certificate of completion.
 - c. Is familiar with the material contained in the supplementary instructions for FROs (Attachment 1).



DION E. DECAMP, Col, CAP
Nevada Wing Commander

Attach: Supplementary FRO instructions

Attachment 1

Supplementary FRO Instructions

This message will highlight three points. First, it will give you some detailed information about the importance of your flight releases. Second, it will cover the potential financial harm which can result from an improper flight release. Finally, it will discuss tools available to you to insure your flight releases are complete and correct.

You know from your FRO training that flights you release under either A or B mission symbols are covered by Federal tort exemption and Federal Employee Compensation legislation. CAP pilots are protected from being sued for liability damages since they are acting as instrumentalities of the Federal Government. They are entitled to Federal medical insurance and death benefits as well. On the other hand, flights that you release under C mission symbols are covered by CAP corporate insurance. Our members and their families rely on this coverage which CAP has promised to provide.

Recent experience in Nevada and other Wings has prompted a review at National of flight release procedures. Among other problems, it appears that an improper flight release could jeopardize our insurance coverage. This could not only deny death benefits to the families, but could also open them up to lawsuits which could impair the financial future of the families. We are talking very serious business here.

Use of proper forms is one aspect of proper releases. This is the reason that the Wing Commander has recently reminded all squadrons that only National 104's can be used until we get our Nevada 104 approved. And FRO's must always monitor the CAP website to be certain they are using the latest CAPF 99 as well.

But use of proper forms is not the only issue. Statistics show that in a MAJORITY of accident cases, there was at least some problem with the data in the flight release. These statistics suggest that if an accident review board were to carefully examine your own flight releases, they would probably find a number of discrepancies. These could put you, our crews and their families at risk.

It is still true that the final responsibility for conducting a flight lies with the pilot-in-command. The regulations specifically point out that the FRO is not a dispatcher. On the other hand, the FRO does owe our members a reasonable bona fide effort to discover any reasons the flight should not be released. I am certain that none of you would like to be before a court of law, with millions of dollars of damages at stake, trying to demonstrate that you made that reasonable bona fide effort.

So how do you, as the FRO, determine that the flight should be released? There are three tools available to you, and they can be graded as to the degree of protection

which they provide to you, our members and the corporation. The Wing strongly recommends that you use the highest level of tool possible under the specific circumstances.

The minimum you should do is religiously use the checklist provided in CAPR 60-1, attachment 8. I am a pilot, I regularly request flight releases from various FRO's, and I know from personal experience that even this minimum requirement is often short-cut. Even the most honest pilot does not necessarily remember that his medical expired yesterday, that his Form 5 was due last month, or that his three take-offs and landings (which seem like yesterday) were actually 91 days ago. The purpose of the flight release system is to jog the pilot's memory, and even ask him to review his documents if there is any question.

A second level of protection is provided by the Wing Management Utility (WMU). The Wing uses this computer tool to monitor pilot records. Pilots enter information about their required documents (Form 5, Form 91, flight review, medical, etc.), when they send their documents to the squadron for filing. Then a squadron officer independently verifies this information upon receipt of the document. This provides third party assurance that all of the data in the WMU is accurate. FRO's can access this data in the form of a Pilot Listing, which shows which pilots are current. FRO's should either consult this list in real time, or print the list periodically as an aid to flight releasing. The Pilot Listing shows those pilots who are current to fly at least one type of mission, but does not guarantee that they are qualified to fly the requested mission. For example, a pilot without a current Form 91 would still be shown as current, because that pilot is qualified to fly a C-1 proficiency mission. But that pilot would not be qualified to fly a search and rescue mission. The pilot listing insures some level of qualification, but only as of the date it was printed and not necessarily for every type of mission.

The best protection is to use the electronic flight release feature in the WMU to actually do the flight release. Under the Operations Staff section from the main menu you will find the very first button is CAPF 99. This electronic form should be filled out while on the phone with the pilot-in-command. The form will walk you, step-by-step, through all the required information. When this is all entered, you click the button at the bottom labeled Enter Sortie Request. The WMU will then automatically check the pilot's credentials on file, and compare them to the requirements of the specific mission. Any discrepancies will come back to you in big red letters, warning you that there is a question about the requested release.

Big red letters do not necessarily mean that the flight is improper, because they are based on DOCUMENTS ON FILE at the squadron. For example, the pilot may have gotten a new medical yesterday, and it has not yet been received by the squadron. In such a case you can have the pilot fax you a copy, or otherwise ascertain that there are legitimate documents beyond those on file. You can always override the warnings. But

at the least you will be alerted to potential problems. And you can be absolutely certain that some qualified third party has actually seen the documents which determine eligibility. If you decide to deny the release, there is a button for this as well. This creates a written record that you did deny the release, just in case the pilot should decide to try a less demanding FRO or fly the mission anyhow.

The only item not covered by the WMU, because it is not a CAP-required document, is the three take-offs and landings. That issue should be discussed with the pilot during the release conversation. But using the electronic release form provides the maximum protection to everyone.

The electronic release has additional benefits to you and the Wing. You do not need to fax electronic releases to the Wing at the end of each month – they are automatically available and printed at Wing. And the computerized data helps Wing with aircraft maintenance and various Wing reporting requirements.

It will not always be possible to use the electronic release procedure. You may be contacted on your cell phone while away from home or office. Your computer may be down. In such cases, you can either refer the pilot to another release officer, or use one of the lesser tools to generate the release.

We encourage you to try this out for yourself. Our Wing Safety Officer, Bob Berrington, does not have a current medical, and he has volunteered to be your guinea pig. Try generating an arbitrary flight release for Bob and see what the system comes back and tells you. We believe that this simple test drive will convince you of the value of the electronic release form. Just so you do not clutter up the data base, after you see the warnings, just click the red “X” in the upper right corner to close the WMU window – don’t override the warning and enter the release into the system. If you have any problems, you are welcome to email me, or to call me at (775) 586-9595. I will be happy to walk you through the process.

In summary, the flight release is a critical legal document which can have profound financial impact on our members and their families. You **MUST** use either the checklist or the checklist plus pilot listing. But it is far preferable to use the electronic release tool in the WMU.

Ralph L. Miller, Lt. Col., CAP
NV/DOV